



Urban Rivers Restoration Pilot Fact Sheet Gowanus Canal and Bay Ecosystem Restoration New York

Background --The Gowanus Creek Canal, constructed in 1881 to accommodate industrial users and commercial shippers on the Brooklyn waterfront, extends approximately one mile north of the Hamilton Avenue Bridge. The Gowanus Watershed is a highly developed urban area located in the Borough of Brooklyn, City of New York. There are approximately 60 acres of open water surface area along the canal. The historic uses in and around the Gowanus Canal have caused a significant amount of hazardous materials to deposit themselves at the bottom of the canal. In addition, the natural water habitat has been drastically changed and detrimentally affected.

Current Activities – As an urban rivers restoration pilot, the Gowanus Canal seeks to showcase partnerships not only between the US EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers, but also with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the New York City Office of Environmental Coordination, the Gowanus Canal Community Development Corporation, Red Dive Performance Art Group, Urban Divers, Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment and the Borough of Brooklyn. Some of the specifics of the partnership include: restoration of water flow to enhance aquatic habitat and water quality, creation of wetlands and upland buffers, water quality improvements, increases in biological diversity and alteration of hydrology/hydraulics to improve water movement and quality, public usage (view areas, walking/bike trails, parks, greenways).

Authority and Funding – The Army Corps of Engineers and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection are

cost sharing an estimated \$5 million feasibility study to assess the environmental problems and potential solutions to restore the ecological health of the Gowanus Canal to aid and compliment other activities to revitalize the area..

Additionally, the Army Corps of Engineers, US Environmental Protection Agency, New York Department of State, New York City Office of Environmental Coordination and the Gowanus Canal Community Development Corporation are collaborating to address waterfront Brownfields assessment needs and revitalization initiatives.

The Future – Ideas abound for restoring the Canal so that it will become the focus of a vibrant residential community and commercial area. Over time, the pilots success will be evident by a reduction of contaminant levels in dredged materials; enhancement in water quality; an increase in recreational functions and an overall reversal in the community's economic degradation.



Points of Contact:

EPA - Eric Stern, 212-637-3806

Corps - Thomas Shea, 212-264-5570